



Representative Louise M. Slaughter
Chairwoman, House Committee on Rules
Representing New York's 28th District

PRESS RELEASE

Slaughter Statement on President Obama's Trip to Canada

Rochester, NY - Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Chair of the House Rules Committee, today issued the following statement in light of President Obama's trip to Canada:

"I commend President Obama's efforts to shine a spotlight on our relationship with Canada and the challenges facing border communities like mine. The U.S.-Canada relationship is the largest trading partnership in the world and it is critical during these hard economic times that we keep our border open for business while encouraging a healthy trade relationship.

This trip is a great step in fostering an open dialogue with our closest ally, and will help shine light on two key aspects of northern border policy: the pending implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) and Shared Border Management. These critical issues can't be ignored and are incredibly timely. I applaud the steps already being taken and I look forward to working with the Administration and my congressional colleagues on these issues in the months ahead."

Background:

Chairwoman Slaughter has been a leader on U.S.-Canada relations. Earlier this month, Rep. Slaughter joined Rep. McHugh to a letter to President Obama prior to his trip, encouraging him to re-engage the Canadian government on Shared Border Management negotiations. In the 110th Congress, Rep. Slaughter introduced the Protecting American Commerce and Travel (PACT) Act, a bill designed to ensure that WHTI did not unintentionally freeze trade and

tourism with Canada, and which included language to delay WHTI implementation from January, 2008 until June, 2009. In 2007 Rep. Slaughter led the charge to have this delay included in the FY08 Omnibus appropriations bill which was signed into law in December of that year. This action was necessary in order to make sure that we do not rush this proposal that currently has many flaws, and it was incorporated into the final rule on the land and sea portion of WHTI which was released by DHS on March 27, 2008.